

Glyphosate

November 1, 2022

In news- The Centre has officially restricted the use of the widely used herbicide, glyphosate, fearing risk to human and animal health.

Key updates-

- **From now, glyphosate will be applied only through pest control operators (PCOs).**
- PCOs are **licensed to use deadly chemicals for treating pests such as rodents.**
- To implement the order, all certificates of registration for the chemical that companies have to get for its manufacture or sale have now to be returned to the registration committee.
- The order says if any company fails to return the registration certificates within three months, **appropriate action will be taken under the Insecticides Act of 1968.**
- Glyphosate is already banned in some states.
- The World Health Organization (**WHO**) and the International Agency for Research on Cancer published a study in 2015 that said **glyphosate is “probably carcinogenic to humans”.**

What is glyphosate?

- Glyphosate is a broad-spectrum systemic **herbicide and crop desiccant.**
- It is an organophosphorus compound, **specifically a phosphonate**, which acts by inhibiting the plant enzyme 5-enolpyruvylshikimate-3-phosphate synthase.
- It is used to **kill weeds, especially annual broadleaf weeds and grasses** that compete with crops.
- Its herbicidal effectiveness was discovered by Monsanto chemist John E. Franz in 1970. Monsanto brought it to

market for agricultural use in 1974 under the trade name Roundup.

- **Glyphosate has been majorly used in tea plantations in India** where it is **applied to control herbicides**. The chemical is **also used on non-crop areas to control unwanted growth**.
- These include **areas alongside irrigation channels, railway sidings, fallow land, bunds, farm borders,** parks, industrial and military premises, airports, power stations, etc.
- The use of glyphosate rose manifold once Ht BT cotton started getting illegally cultivated in India.